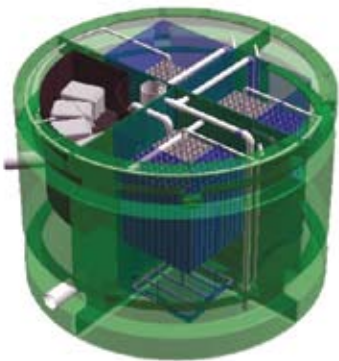


# products

## Water wise

In these days of droughts and global warming, it is ever more crucial to stop needlessly wasting water. One solution is the Venus, a septic system that takes your household water — including sewage — and cleans it up so that it can be used for yard irrigation. This makes the Venus — designed by Danish company Biokube — much more efficient than ordinary tanks, which settle solids out via sheer gravity. The Venus puts the water through several membranes housing bacteria, making it clean enough to go straight into your soil.

[www.biokube.co.uk](http://www.biokube.co.uk)



## Ethical fashion



The Re: Fashion Awards are the world's first ethical fashion awards. Presented in London on 13 November, the twelve awards "celebrate social and environmental improvements in retail, manufacture and consumer engagement." Categories include Retailer of the Year, the Cotton Award and the Africa Award.

In a sign that sustainable fashion is no longer the domain of hemp-wearing radicals, the glitzy event brought together scenesters like Pixie Geldof and Oswald Boateng and featured fashion by leading designers, including Vivienne Westwood.



The Environment Award went to Veja — a French company that produces sneakers through small producers in Brazil — for its pioneering work replacing traditional cotton by organic cotton, supporting wild latex production in Amazonia to fight



against deforestation, and using ecological leather instead of chrome tanned leather.

Pachacuti, won both the Business Award and the People Award. A Fairtrade fashion company, it produces a range of goods from alpaca knitwear to Panama hats that aims to improve the lives of Andean producers.

And the Cotton Awards went to Pants to Poverty, an organization that sells organic underwear through



ethical and independent shops to raise money for the Make Poverty History campaign.

[www.refashionawards.org](http://www.refashionawards.org)

## Electric scooter



No fumes, no noise, no emissions and no visits to the gas station — the Chinese-built Ego Street Scoota is a 100 per cent electric scooter that can be charged using the mains electricity supply. The bike has a 30-to 40-mile range and a top speed of 30 mph — not bad considering it only costs around eight pence for an eight-hour charge. Could this be the answer to high fuel prices, congestion and, ultimately, global warming?

<http://www.firebox.com/product/2166/Ego-Electric-Street-Scoota>

## Helping refugees

The Gaia Association won an Ashden Award earlier this year for its work providing ethanol-fuelled stoves to around 1,800 families in eastern Ethiopia's Kebribeyah refugee camp. Some 17,000 people live in the camp, having fled conflict in neighbouring Somalia — and they rely on fuelwood for cooking. The Gaia Association's project is helping to prevent the indiscriminate wood use which has contributed to extensive deforestation in the area, as well as greatly improving the refugees' living conditions. The ethanol is produced from locally-available molasses, a sugar by-product which previously caused pollution.

[www.gvepinternational.org](http://www.gvepinternational.org)



## Solar concentrator



We could soon collect solar energy through our windows. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have developed a light-absorbing dye that, when painted on a window, transfers energy via the glass into solar cells at the window's edges. The scientists found a 30 per cent higher performance with the combined system of light-absorbing dye and solar panels compared to a stand-alone solar cell. Ultimately, they think this approach will allow us to nearly double the performance of existing solar cells for minimal added cost. The 'solar concentrator' could be marketed within three years.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/10/solarpower.renewableenergy>

## Solar-powered radio

The world's first solar-powered digital radio, launched by British company Roberts, capitalizes on solar energy while avoiding the environmental scourge of batteries — no mean feat given that the U.K., for example, consumes around 30,000 tonnes of portable batteries every year. The radio provides up to 27 hours of listening away from sunlight.

<http://www.biggreensmile.com/products/roberts-solar-powered-dab-radio/rbsoldab.aspx?productid=rbsoldab>

